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161702Z Feb 05

UNCLAS PARIS 001001

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STATE FOR EB/IFD/OFD (GARBER & WARD), WHA/CAR AND EUR/WE
STATE PASS USAID/LAC
PORT-AU-PRINCE FOR ECON (REIMER)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [HA](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: HAITI: FRENCH UNLIKELY TO CHANGE VIEWS ON HAITI
MINISTERIAL

REF: A. A) MERTEN-WARD E-MAILS 15 FEBRUARY 05 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. B) STATE 25099

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: French MFA and Cooperation (USAID-equivalent) officials report that any decision to change the venue or date of the proposed ministerial meeting on development assistance for Haiti would have to be taken by Foreign Minister Barnier or even President Chirac. If we hope to turn around the GOF on the details of this proposed ministerial, the GOF will have to receive similar strong messages about the impracticability of Cayenne as a venue and the conflicts regarding the date from other key countries. End Summary and comment.

[1](#)2. (C) On 15 November Poloff called on DAS-Equivalent for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, Gilles Bienvenu and Haiti Desk Officer Pierre Filatoff on the proposed Cayenne ministerial on Haiti development assistance coordination. Bienvenu indicated that the U.S. was not the only country with concerns as to the choice of location. The Brazilians and others had also requested a change of venue for logistical reasons. Nevertheless, Bienvenu highlighted what he saw as Cayenne's advantages, saying it was not a bad place and that the attendees would be in and out within one day. When Poloff questioned this, Bienvenu admitted that for a one-day meeting a more convenient location might be better. Any decision on a change of locale would have to be made at either the Presidential or the Foreign Minister's level, he said.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Regarding the meeting itself, Bienvenu explained that it would be small -- only a few countries and three or four representatives at a high level from each. The purpose was communication between the important actors to discuss concrete actions that could be taken quickly. The goal would be to choose a few projects (not too many, or it would get bogged down) and put them into action. One example Bienvenu cited was a French-Mexican-US supported hospital in Port-de-Paix that could receive electricity from one country, supplies from another, and infrastructure from a third. He also envisioned combining the meeting with press/radio coverage -- the people of Port-de Paix would hear the announcement on the radio and see the results, showing the Haitians that the international community didn't just promise money, but also followed through. Bienvenu underlined his view that the whole process would be symbolic as well as substantive, although the goal would be to focus on high impact, short-term projects in order to actually get them done.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Bienvenu also questioned participating in a conference call before the 24 February meeting in Paris, but gave Poloff a contact name and number "should someone want to talk to him before the 24th." The meeting on the 24th is to lay out the objectives, methods, and projects for discussion on 18 March.

[1](#)5. (SBU) At Cooperation (USAID-equivalent), Econ Chief heard a similar message. Roland Navaro told Econ Chief that "France would be represented at the ministerial level, but each country would choose its own delegation." He emphasized that aside from a minister, the GOF envisioned that "a technical person, familiar with the projects" in Haiti should also be part of any delegation. This knowledge would be important as the discussion would involve concrete plans and projects. He also indicated that he would be interested in participating in the conference call proposed for 22 February. He noted that any decision to modify the level or change the venue would have to be made at the Ministerial or even Presidential level. He indicated that Minister Barnier was personally committed to doing this in Cayenne.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Navaro also reported that he had just returned from Haiti and that he and his colleagues were very impressed by the French-U.S. coordination in Haiti. He said that both countries should look at ways of making this cooperation more

well known both within Haiti (to show the Haitians that the international community is unified in wanting to help them) and in our own countries (as an example of what can be accomplished by working together).
Leach